for sustainable development, weather research missions, tele-medicine, tele-education and disaster management. Joint workshops on civilian space applications and research have also started.

As part of the process of stimulating high technology commerce, including trade in 'dual use' items, the two sides have established a bilateral High Technology Cooperation Group, which held its first meeting in Washington D.C. on 1-2 July, 2003. This is the first such group that the United States has set up with any country. The Group discussed regulatory and promotional issues related to enhancing trade in 'dual use' goods and technologies, including for civilian nuclear and space applications in India, as well as advancing cooperation in areas such as information technology, life sciences, nano-technology and defence technology.

Exposure of workers to radiation

1185. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether workers of Kalpakkam Atomic Reprocessing Plant were over-exposed to high radiation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps being taken as safety measures to avoid such incidents in future;

(d) whether the victims can continue with the present job after this incident; and

(e) whether Government would provide any compensation to the victims taking into account the damage caused to their lives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. There has been an incident of over-exposure of six persons at the Kalpakkam Reprocessing Plant (KARP) on January 21, 2003.

(b) On January 21, 2003, when the Reprocessing Plant was under normal operation, there was an incident of inadvertent over-exposure to radiation of six persons during the process of transfer of low level liquid waste from a tank in an area, away from the main Reprocessing Plant. The cause of the incident, as identified later on by a specially constituted Technical Committee, was a minor leak in an isolation valve

separating a high level liquid waste tank from the low level liquid waste tank resulting in increase in activity level in the latter. Since the leak was of a minor nature, it had gone unnoticed by the persons involved in the transfer of liquid waste. This was noticed when a sample of the low level liquid waste which was being transferred showed a higher than expected level of radioactivity. As a result, the six personnel who were involved in this transfer operation were inadvertently exposed to higher than the annual dose limit. The safety authorities have investigated the incident according to the procedure, which involves measurement of radiation doses received, establishing the root cause and medical examination of the exposed personnel. The Medical Authorities have certified that all these six personnel are in good health and there were no abnormal findings. There was neither any release of radioactivity to the environment nor any risk of exposure to any member of the public.

(c) Bhaba Atomic Research Centre has well laid out mechanisms to review the safety status of Operating Plants. As per prevailing practice, the facility was immediately shutdown and an independent Technical Committee was set up to investigate the abnormal incident, so that remedial measures could be taken to prevent such recurrence and to disseminate the lessons learnt to other similar facilities. BARC are implementing the recommendations of the Technical Committee.

(d) Yes, Sir. Since these personnel involved are physically fit and are in good health with no adverse symptoms, they are quite capable to continue to work in the Reprocessing Plant. However, as per the prevailing Safety Guidelines followed at BARC, these persons have been assigned jobs in the non-radioactive areas.

(e) In view of the fact that the medical report certifies that the persons involved are in good health, the question of compensation does not arise.

Poor telecom services in Jangla, H.P.

†1186. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that appointment of additional employees, installation of generator and a 512 line exchange in place of 256 line

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.